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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0299
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 3939
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO IMMEDIATE 4193
RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN IMMEDIATE 0300
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA IMMEDIATE 9266
RUEHHE/AMEMBASSY HELSINKI IMMEDIATE 0101
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 2179
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 3599
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 9212
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO IMMEDIATE 0212
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 1736
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE 1077
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 000426

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DEPT FOR SA/INS, PRM

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TAGS: [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: BHUTANESE CHIEF JUDGE: REFUGEES ARE NOT CITIZENS

REF: A. NEW DELHI 736

[1](#)B. PITOTTI 2/9 E-MAIL

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty, Reasons, 1.4 (b/d).

Restrict Bhutanese Citizenship

[1](#)1. (U) The February 12 English-language daily The Himalayan Times reported that the Bhutanese government-owned "kunselonline" quoted Bhutan's Chief Justice as saying that the Bhutanese refugees in Nepal were not Bhutanese citizens as per Bhutan's 1985 Citizenship Act. Checking kunselonline, the February 11 article "People of Tsirang discuss the draft Constitution with the Crown Prince" reported that members of the public "felt that citizenship should be restricted to those born of Bhutanese parents. They also said that they were aware that the camps in Nepal with immigrants claiming Bhutanese citizenship was (sic) infiltrated by Maoists, Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) and other militants. All steps must be taken to prevent the entry of such people into Bhutan." Bhutanese refugee leaders in Kathmandu decried the Chief Justice's statement. Bhutanese refugee leader and activist Teknath Rizal denied that non-Bhutanese were living in the refugee camps. He sought the help of the donor community to resolve the issue. Noting the upcoming Bhutan Donor Group Meeting in Geneva February 15, Rizal urged donors to stop aid to Bhutan.

Comment

[1](#)2. (C) Following the January 31 comments by the Bhutanese Ambassador to New Delhi (ref A) and the early February caveats by the Bhutanese DCM at the UN (ref B), the Chief Justice seems to be trying to send a pretty clear Royal Government of Bhutan (RGOB) message that Thimpu is not interested in accepting the return of any refugees. Interestingly, the Bhutanese King and Foreign Minister are using lower-level officials, so they presumably can disavow the message at a later date, if need be. This makes it

extremely important that the international community use the February 15 roundtable conference to advise the RGOB that ethnic cleansing is not acceptable, the international community is monitoring to see whether repatriation occurs in a timely manner, and, if not, is prepared to step in.

MORIARTY